**Rationale:** Students need multiple measures as a way to define their abilities and to document the writer’s development and growth over time. It offers a much “richer picture of a student’s writing than a single writing on demand assessment can” (NWP 79). It also stresses that the student own what they write and focus on quality of their writing by systematically revisiting multiple pieces.

**What is a writing portfolio?**

A writing portfolio is a place for students to keep a limited number of writing samples. It is not a place to put things completed in class.

**Why use a portfolio?**

The greatest benefit-they help teachers to identify strength and weaknesses in a student’s writing. It benefits the student because it causes them to begin to understand that writing, reading, thinking and collaborating are linked and recursive. It is also a way to encourage students to be responsible for their work and to put forth their best efforts.

**How many pieces of writing are included in the portfolio?**

The teacher needs to decide the amount. Many districts have mandated a specific writing genre that students are tested on in a given quarter. For example, FUSD 10th grade curriculum has student writing a biographical or autobiographical narrative. Clearly, the teacher would have many mini writing assignments that they can draw from to place in the portfolio. This benefits the student because they choose what they consider their best writing to revise and submit for a grade.

**How can I help myself be more organized so I can best help my students?**

The teacher must set up a routine starting the beginning of school. Kelly Gallagher suggests writing “sneezes” Monday thru Thursday about an interesting topic while on Friday, students choose their best piece to revise and turn in for a grade.

An idea our reading group had was to have students take home their best piece on Thursday to type, double space in order to prepare for revision on Friday. We really wanted to honor the “think book” by not having students rip out pages. When students finish revision on Friday, they put that piece into their portfolio to be held until a later date. If your class is like FUSD, the entire first quarter focus will be about narrative and the elements that are linked to it.

**How can I get my students to be active participants with their portfolio?**

One solution is to use the portfolios as a way to self-assess. This promotes metacognition and collaboration in the class. This is the place where one-on-one conferences must happen. The teacher must be able to communicate with the student about what is working and what is not. Offer suggestions and listen to the student’s interest in their piece.

**Materials Needed:**

Think books (any stitched-bound notebook) – at least one for each student  
Packing tape when the binding comes apart after extensive use  
Hanging folders  
Manila folders  
File drawer or file crate  
Easily accessible space in your room for the files, preferably away from your desk  
Assignment sheet or log for accountability  
Predetermined portfolio assessment or conference dates

**Sample Portfolio Ingredients:**  
*(Tailor to your classroom and students)*

1. An analysis (i.e. theme, conflict, archetype, and other literary devices.)
2. A review of one novel read independently.
3. A descriptive essay.
4. A poem.
5. A research/expository paper.
6. A reflective paper on their best piece of writing from either semester.
7. Your choice paper in addition to the above – poem, story, essay, letter, college essay, or reader response.

This portfolio will be treated as one test grade for first term. All assignments must be completed satisfactorily for you to earn a “C.” Strive for elegance and you can earn an “A.” An incomplete portfolio is an “F.” For another two grades you are to select two pieces you want me to grade separately in the traditional manner; at least one choice must be 2 and/or 7.